

4476 g. 107:

THE ²⁴⁰
Folly and Lothfomnefs
OF
S I N,

DISPLAY'D
In a brief DISCOURSE
ON

Prov. xxvi. 11.

By MATTHEW TOWGOOD. *K*

2 Tim. iii. 8, 9. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do those also resist the Truth: Men of corrupt Minds, reprobate concerning the Faith. But they shall proceed no further: For their Folly shall be manifest unto all Men, as theirs also was.

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. ROBINSON at the Golden-Lyon in
Ludgate-Street, 1748.

THE



THE

THE

THE

T H E

P R E F A C E.

PART of what is contain'd in the following Pages was deliver'd several Years ago at an Evening-Lecture on the Lord's Day. I then declin'd its Publication, tho' earnestly solicited thereunto, being desirous to draw a Veil over what immediately ensued on it; namely, an Expulsion of myself and Friends from that Place of Worship wherein I had spoken with such Freedom against the unfruitful Works of Darknes.

'Tis natural for Readers, if perfectly unapprized of this Affair before, from such an Hint to conjecture, that some merciless Tyrant or other had been prompted by his Enmity against Religion in general, as well as Nonconformity in particular, to the Commission of so detestable a Wickedness, and laid hold on the first Opportunity which presented itself unto him for the Execution of his hellish Design. But how will they be astonish'd to be inform'd, that none besides those who subscrib'd my CALL to minister amongst them, were concern'd herein? that I had been chosen a few Years before with great Unanimity? I had indeed given no small Uneasiness to Males and Females in the Course of my Labours, by preaching several Sermons both against Backbiting and swearing, tho' I did not spare any other

Vice as it came in my Way. Having been accustomed in my Youth (as those of my Hearers who are yet alive can witness) to inveigh with some Boldness against the Sins of the Age, I could see no Reason to forbear it in the Decline of Life, or to look upon *POOLE* as wholly exempted from the common Pollutions of the World. Nor did I once imagine I should have been treated in so outrageous a Manner, for doing something in *this* Place, which by my Ordination-Vows I was obliged to do in *all* Places whither Providence should send me.

However, I was loth to expose the Nakedness of those who had been guilty of such an enormous Action at that Time, not knowing but they might repent of their rash and unwarrantable Procedure; besides, I thought it would be interpreted the Effect of Pique and Resentment in myself, and not so becoming the Character of one, who is willing to appear the meek and humble Servant of a meek and lowly Master. But finding the Devil has made his Earnings of my long Silence, and that by this Means there has been an Increase to more Ungodliness, I think some Obligation laid on me to beg Forgiveness both of God and Man for my Neglect. I must therefore confess the unhappy Indolence of Temper (which both betrayed me into many Inconveniences in Life on other Occasions) in the present Case: For I ought to have paid a greater Regard to the Interest of Christianity, and the Reputation of those who had stood by me, when so indecently trampled upon; nay, the Conviction also of those who had used me in so base and perfidious a Manner. Let none then complain, that I have at last not only made some Additions to my Sermon, but likewise prefixed the following Apology. For, tho' I had lately prevailed with myself to publish the following Discourse, yet, being loth to stir a Wasp's Nest, I signified

signified to divers of my Acquaintance the Intention I had of making no Remarks on former Differences ; but have since, on mature Consideration, retracted that Purpose, not knowing any just Reason that could be given for keeping the Devil's Counsel, and being sure, notwithstanding all the Opposition I could meet with from himself or his Instruments, I must still be on the strongest Side. I have indeed been a thousand Times refreshed with my Efforts against Profaneness, and am willing to persuade myself they han't been all in vain.

I had, however, been so rough with Sinners Lusts, that I was requested at length to accept of an Assistant. This I complied with ; for tho' a vigorous Constitution, wherewith God has blest me, had made it less necessary, yet I thought a Prospect of more extensive Usefulness was a sufficient Cause. Soon after my Assistant was to be changed into a Co-pastor. This I also consented to, tho' I knew it it proceeded from Disrespect to myself ; nay, was not only reconciled to it, but much taken therewith, hoping by this means to enjoy the Conversation of a learned and pious Friend at home, and that both of us might sometimes be serviceable abroad too. But whilst I was in Expectation hereof, a Messenger came to me from a few of the Congregation the Day after (as I remember, or the next following) I had preached the Lecture aforesaid, who desired to speak with me. I waited on them accordingly, when, to my great Surprise, I was askt, Whether I would resign my Pulpit ? To which (as I had Reason) I answered in the Negative, and demanded the Meaning of so sudden an Alteration. One then present told me, I had called him a Dog ; for I had said, that Sinners were Dogs, and he was a Sinner. To whom I replied, that God and his own Conscience best knew what he was, but that I myself had no particular Design to expose him.

Another

Another of them told me, that he was a Man and no Dog. After some more of such trifling Talk we parted, and soon after I understood the Meeting-house Doors were shut, without the Knowledge, much more the Consent of the far greater Part of the Congregation. This arbitrary and unjustifiable Conduct I freely expostulated with them about, both by Word and Letter; but opposed the violent opening the Doors again, tho' the chief Magistrate of the Town would have interposed his Authority for that Purpose. Many indeed of my good Friends have blamed me, and continue to do so, for such a tame Submission to tyrannical Proceedings, who tell me that I should still have had the Bulk of the Auditory, if I had kept my former Station. But as I had not been used to stand over an hot Oven; nor had ever before lived in the Fire I chose to retreat with my Adherents to an House, where we might enjoy our Sabbaths without a Mixture of Malecontents, rather than be insulted as a Tyrant for driving any from their accustomed Place of Worship; or having such for my Hearers as would be a dead Weight upon me, and perpetually lye upon the Catch. However, I don't think it inexpedient, even at some Distance of Time, to take Notice of the several aggravating Circumstances attending the Perpetration of this Fact, because many of them, instead of being humbled, are puffed up, vainly triumphing in a supposed Victory; and, like the adulterous Woman, *Prov. xxx. 20. Wiping their Mouths, and saying, they have done no Wickedness.* Besides, the setting a public Brand upon it, may serve for an Admonition and Caution unto others, not to tread in the same Steps. Let it then be considered, that *This* was committed in the Face of the Sun, the Doors being kept fast Day after Day. Without

Without any Leave of, or giving the least Intimation to others immediately concerned.

Speedily after a faithful and zealous Discourse against Prophaneness, wherein no antient Heresies were revived, nor new ones broached, nor any thing delivered, but what Christians of all Denominations, nay *Jews, Turks, civiliz'd Pagans*, and all besides downright Atheists in Speculation or Practice har-
monize in.

The Sermon was preach'd before a considerable Number of Debauchees, who, being mostly in low Life, would probably be more affected with a plain and rough Discourse, wherein their own Artillery was discharged against themselves, than with a more polish'd Harangue.

The sudden Ejection of the Preacher hereupon had a manifest Tendency to erase serious Impressions out of their Minds, who would be ready to conclude that HE was more to blame for reprov-
ing of Sin. than THEMSELVES for the Commission of it; especially if it be considered, that

This was done at the Connivance and Approbation, if not by the Instigation of such, as had long made a Profession of Religion.

Some also of those who had pretended themselves my most zealous and hearty Friends were concern'd herein, nay solicited others to become the Abettors of their Wickedness.

They were likewise the smaller Number who committed or encouraged this Fact, there being an uncontested Majority of Proprietors against them, amongst whom I was one myself.

This was done in a populous Town, once famous for Religion, but of late notoriously sunk as to its Morals, and grown infamous for Swearing, Drunkenness, Uncleanliness, &c.

Hereby also Occasion was given to the common Enemy to mock at our Sabbaths, to insult us and

our holy Religion on the Account of our scandalous Divisions.

Several concern'd herein had also young Families, who finding their Parents so angry when Wickedness was exposed, might from thence take Encouragement to commit all Uncleaness with Greediness; nay, a certain young Person was employed by one of his nearest Relations to nail the outer Gate which leads to our House of Worship.

A Watch was likewise set on the House to guard it.

They hereby excluded themselves, as well as their Neighbours, like *Æsop's Dog* in the Manger, who would neither feed himself, nor permit the Ox to do so.

This was also done at a Time, when a melancholly Cloud hung over the Nation, and this Town in particular, which did soon after burst forth in an expensive and bloody War, that still subsists.

No Charge has ever been exhibited in Writing against me, tho' I have often challenged them to do it.

It farther deserves Consideration, that this was necessarily attended with the apparent Violation of a solemn previous Contract, viz. the fixing in a Co-pastor, in Conjunction with myself: But, in answer to this, one of them told me in his own House, they should never have a bright Man come amongst them as long as I was suffered to preach.

It may also be observed, that they who have been so warm and furious in this Affair, have so poorly subscribed to the Support of their Ministers in Time past, notwithstanding their boasted Wealth, (whatever they have done since) as, if their Example had been followed in other Places, would long before now have starved Nonconformity out of the Kingdom.

This

This base and perfidious Dealing hath also given a dreadful Blow to the dissenting Interest: For, if a Person who had been of long Standing in the Ministry, and acquired a Reputation equal to most of his Brethren in the Country, is served at so scurvy a rate, how must Juniors be discouraged from entering our Pulpits? One may without a Spirit of Prophecy venture to say, that without a remarkable Interposition of Providence, there won't be any great occasion e're long for Locks or Bars to keep Preachers out.

While I seriously reflect on these Things, it gives me no small Regret, that two of my Reverend Brethren (one of whom resided not in this Country) should discover such gross Partiality as they did in comprobing, or at least winking at this intolerable Conduct, when sent for in a clandestine Way, without any Intimation given to myself or Friends. But St. *Peter* himself was made a Tool of *Satan* once and again. Besides, one of these Gentlemen having laboured under a *Delirium* a little before, I am willing methinks to impute his otherwise odd Management unto *that*.

I presume, no candid or impartial Person will blame me for laying the fore-mentioned Particularities in the Way, where *their* Consciences will find them *who* are more immediately concerned therein, if they give due Attention.

But because Sinners Lusts are fretful, peevish, impatient Things, I look on myself obliged to vindicate the Pages following, from the Cavils and Exceptions that may be urged against them. 'Tis indeed very common for Authors to despise the Censures of the meaner Sort, not thinking a *Galeatus Prologus* necessary to defend themselves from *vulgar Tattle*, when they are morally certain they can trust themselves in the Hands of the wise and judicious. I own, in philosophical Speculations, or the more

knotty Points of polemical Theology, this Method is just enough; but in Matters purely practical, wherein the immortal Interests of all are concerned, I humbly conceive, there should be a Condescension so far, as to stop the Mouths of every Gainsayer. For the Prince of Darkness serves his Purposes exceedingly, by the little *Jerks* and *Flurts* (tho never so trite and thread-bare) that are imploy'd against serious Godliness. Wherefore, these Objections which can't be supposed to DESERVE an Answer, do nevertheless NEED one. The Questions which I shall give distinct, tho' brief, Replies to, are such, as I have either for the most Part *heard* myself, or *been informed* of. Some of them flow from Rage and Scorn, others from sottish Ignorance and Stupidity, and a few have dropt from the Lips of (I hope) well-meaning, but weak, Christians.

Q. 1. Why did I choose such a Text? A. Because infinite Wisdom had chosen it long before. Being among those Scriptures given by *Inspiration of God*, I thought it *profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness*, having been also cited by the Apostle *Peter*, 2 *Pet.* ii. 22.

Q. 2. Will it do any Good? A. I hope it may. Neither can all the Men on Earth or Devils in Hell be sure of the contrary, nor (what is more) will their united Force be able to hinder its Usefulness, if that God, who has both incarnate and infernal Fiends in Chains, shall be pleased to honour it with his Blessing.

Q. 3. But don't I think I have done something? A. I know I have, and something too which, being supported by the infallible Records, will stand its Ground when the Heavens and Earth shall pass away.

Q. 4. Won't

Q. 4. Wont it be laught at? A. I am too sensible it will. But I shall have no worse Company than the *Lord of Life and Glory* himself, as well as a Multitude besides, of whom the World was not worthy. Not only the Scoundrels and rustic hobbling Satyrs in lower Life, but the more lofty and refined Bullies of the Age may bestow some Sneers upon it. Yet it may be nevertheworse for all that. For these may rather discover hereby some Flaw in their own Intellectuals; *a Fool being known by his much Laughter*. Even in *Laughter the Heart* is sometimes *sorrowful* (as the wise Man tells us) and there is nothing makes a Man look more silly, than a forc'd constrain'd Laugh. Let me however remind these Laughers of the old Proverb, *viz. They laugh best, that laugh last*; and inasmuch as there is a Day coming, when there's one above them, who, without sincere Repentance, will also *laugh at their Calamity, and mock when their Fear cometh*, I would advise them not to *mock now, lest their Bands be made strong*.

Q. 5. Won't some be the worse instead of better by it? A. Saint Paul saith, *to some we are the Saviour of Death unto Death*, as well as the *Savour of Life unto Life to others*: But what comforted him, and may also support all faithful Ministers to the End of the World, is, that *we are unto God a sweet Saviour in Christ in them that perish, as well as in them that are saved*, 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16. Nay, our blessed Lord himself found many were the worse for his Preaching. The Scribes and Pharisees would not have been as they were, nor brought so much Guilt on their Heads as *they* did, if our Saviour had not preach'd in such a Manner as *he* did.

Q. 6. But must I be perpetually *bawling*? A. I must, while Mens Sins do *bawl* so loud to Heaven for Vengeance. Ministers, under the Gospel Dispensation, are as much obliged to cry aloud, not to

spare, but lift up their Voices like Trumpets, as the Prophets of old.

Q. 7. When shall I have done spitting out my Venom? A. I ought to be wise as a Serpent. Now Naturalists have observed of Serpents, that they have their Venom always ready; and indeed, whilst the old Serpent is continually pouring out his Venom into his Instruments, superadding it to that Venom which they had before, 'tis highly requisite for Ministers to have their Antidotes still at Hand. And (to pursue the Metaphor) I am sensible, for my own Part, that I can't spit it too freely or fiercely *whilst I live*, nay please myself with the Prospect of bearing my Testimony against the Devil's Brood *above Ground*, when my Flesh and Bones are rotting under it. We have a Set of Gentlemen (or rather a Pack of Villains) both in the last and present Age, who have prostituted their Wit and Learning to promote the Devil's Kingdom, debauching Youth with filthy Plays, Novels, &c. yet clawing one another with flattering Encomiums on that Account, and hunting for Applause from others. 'Tis surely hard, if they who are set for the Defence of the Gospel, and propagating Holiness, must be blamed for endeavouring to run down Vice, as much as these Wretches strive to exalt it. Mr. Collier in his View of the *English Stage*, and its Defence, deserves the Thanks of all good Men, (tho' I dislike his political Principles) for exposing the Blasphemy, Smut and Profaneness thereof, and endeavouring to guard the rising Generation more especially against the Contagion: But notwithstanding what he and others have written, the Poison still diffuses itself, and seems to have a more general Spread than ever, which therefore leads me to the Solution of another Objection.

Q. 8. Is it a PROPER TIME? A. We may as wisely enquire, whether it be a fit Season, when

a House is on Fire to extinguish the Flame ; and when a Person is sick or wounded, to apply proper Remedies. A Lunatic indeed may be thoughtless and secure, tho' in the utmost Danger, but this renders him yet more the Object of his Neighbours Compassion. I am sure, they are not the best Judges whom the God of this World hath blinded, whom their own deceived Hearts have turned aside. The *present* Time, as to the Affairs of this Life, is universally thought the most *proper* Time, if it can be laid hold on. The Sailor makes use of the first fair Wind, the Captive lays hold on the first Opportunity of releasing himself, the Farmer improves every kind of Weather for doing the Work of the Day in its Day, and has Sense enough to make both Rain and Sun-shine serve his respective Purposes. But, alas ! in Matters of the greatest Moment, and when the everlasting Interests of Men lie at Stake, 'tis, it seems, extremely difficult to hit upon a *proper* Time either to *give*, or to *receive* good Advice. It can certainly be no *proper* Time when the Day of Grace is over, and Sinners lift up their Eyes in Hell. *Behold, now is the accepted Time ; behold, now is the Day of Salvation*, 2. Cor. vi. 2. *I made haste, saith David, and delay'd not to keep thy Commandments*, Psal. cxix. 60. If then it be seasonable forthwith to abandon sensual Pleasures, to abstain from fleshly Lusts, which war against the Soul, to devote ourselves to pure and undefiled Religion : 'Tis of course necessary to give *immediate* Warnings, nay repeated and incessant ones to such as can find a *proper* Time (as they'll call it) for *any* Thing that their Corruptions shall set them about, but never a *convenient* Season for prosecuting the chief Errand they were sent into this World for.

Q. 9. But is it not very rude to call Christians DOGS ? A. To be sure it is ; and yet it is Matter of

of Lamentation, that scarce any Thing is more common, than to call those Dogs, who in the Judgment of Charity are CHRISTIANS indeed, *Followers of the Lamb, Partakers of the Divine Nature*, and therefore peculiar Objects of the Divine Love. Good Men, tho' never so poor, are honourable. *The Righteous is more excellent than his Neighbour*, Prov. xii. 26. Wherefore, they deserve better Usage from those who more justly intitle themselves to *this Name*, while they give it so injuriously to others. I therefore think it as great a Solecism to call a *Dog* a Christian. If we examine the sacred Records, we may there find wicked Men stil'd *Dogs*, but never *Christians*. I think indeed Apes or Monkeys more resemble Men, than profane and licentious Men resemble the Disciples of an holy *Jesus*.

Q. 10. But after all, is it not enough to make one mad to read such Stuff? A. The Design of this Paper is to cure Persons of their Madness, to bring such as labour under a moral or spiritual Lunacy to the proper Exercise of their intellectual Faculties. We have in the fifteenth Chapter of St. *Luke's* Gospel the Story of a young Mad-man brought to his Senses. I should rejoice to find what I have now written accomplishing the like End on the Prodigals of the present Day, nor should I begrudge my Pains, if I could be an Instrument of making any single Fool *wise to Salvation*, tho' every one of his Fellows should deride both *me* and *him* on that Account. There's nothing *here* of doubtful Disputation, or that a Man had need to rack his Brains about (pardon the Finax) till he has crack'd them. (*They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find Knowledge*, Prov. viii. 9.) Here are no metaphysical Inquiries into Mysteries unreveal'd, nor Insults on the Characters of any good Men who differ from their Brethren about

Speculations too deep for any possibly on this Side Heaven to fathom; but only an Attempt to deter Sinners from that under which all the lower Creation now groans, and which also, unless timely repented of, prepares for *everlasting Groans* in Hell.

Q. 11. But is it not likely to turn the Readers as well as Hearers Stomachs? A. If this should be the happy Effect thereof, my Purpose will be served, provided that a Turn of the Stomach issues in a Turn of the Life and Conversation. 'Tis well known, that the Persons of the greatest Quality in the Kingdom chearfully give large Fees to their Physicians to have their Stomachs turn'd. Surgeons are employed in examining the Sores and Wounds and Ulcers of such as are in dangerous Circumstances, tho' they themselves, as well as their Patients, and compassionate Standers by, do *yerk* at the Sight. But perhaps I shall be told, that what I am concern'd in is *another Case*. I confess it to be so, and a CASE of infinitely greater Importance; for what are the Maladies of the Body, compared with those of the immortal Soul? If the Stirring of a Jakes, or raking into a filthy Dunghill, will hinder a Company of Bedlams from rolling therein, who had mistaken the same for a Bed of fragrant Roses, or the Agitation of a common Sink or Sewer will stop them from plunging into it (imagining it to have been some delicious Fountain, before the noisom Exhalations had affected their Nostrils) it ought to be look'd upon as a commendable Piece of Charity, tho' some of the Neighbourhood should be offended. The Comparison, I own, is coarse, and what I should not have used, had I been treating on any other Subject, but the most *a-propos* that I could find for the present Occasion.

Q. 12. Is it not mere *Billingsgate*? A. There are no Oaths or Curses interspersed, nor one Falshood mingled with what I have written: But if faithful

faithful Rebukes deserve *this Appellation*, I confess the Charge, and undertake the Vindication of it from the Example of our Lord himself in the 23d Chap. of St. *Matthew's* Gospel, and elsewhere, as well as many others who might be mention'd in the Old and new Testament.

Q. 13. But if *Michael* the Archangel durst not bring a railing Accusation against the Devil, how dare others to rail who are so much his Inferiors? A. *Michael's* railing against an apostate Spirit in a State of utter Desperation, could have done *neither* of them any Service; we therefore don't find in the Parable of the rich Man and *Lazarus*, that Father *Abraham* treats the wretched Supplait with opprobrious Language; for this would have signified nothing in order to his Reformation, when fix'd in that Hell from which there is no Redemption. (The Railing of the Prophets against his Brethren whom he had left behind might indeed be useful to them, who were yet in a State of Probation.) Nor do I think the Blessed in Heaven will hereafter spend any Part of their Eternity in reproaching and insulting the Damned. Whatever fruitless Railing there will be in the *infernal* Regions, I believe there will be none in the *superior*. The only Place wherein Railing may be of any Benefit or Advantage, must be this present World; for here, thro' a Divine Blessing, *Railers* may both save themselves and those that hear them. Nay, I will venture to ask any wise Man, whether they had not better hearken to all the *Billingsgate* Rhetorick (if they are not asham'd of that invidious Term) that can be found from *Genesis* to the End of the *Revelation*, explained and applied in the keenest Manner, than to hear that short Sentenec from their Judge in the Great Day, *Mat. xxv. 41. Depart from me, ye Cursed, into everlasting Fire, prepared for*

for the Devil and his Angels. Or to be afflicted with the *Billingsgate* of their own Consciences (in Conjunction with that of Tempters to and Associates in Sin) everlastingly.

Q. 14. Well, but is there no MALICE in such Preaching or Writing? A. There is, or, at least, there ought to be Indignation mingled with Reproofs, I mean, against Mens *Vices*, not their *Persons*. As Malice supposes something criminal, to talk of Malice against Sin is downright Nonsense.

Q. 15. But did I not know before-hand, that I should make some People angry with me? A. I had too just Reason to think I should, and so had the Prophets of old. *Moses* had great Reason to conclude, that he should displease *Pharaoh*, especially after he had tried him again and again. *Elijah* and *Micajah* doubtless knew that they should provoke *Abab*. *Ezekiel* might be assured from God himself what Treatment he must look for from the *hardened Jews*. *Daniel* likewise could not be ignorant how unwelcome his Addresses would be to those two haughty Princes, *Nebuchadnezzar* and *Belshazzar*. Our blessed Lord himself perfectly knew how angry he should make some of those to whom he preached in the Days of his Flesh; and he gives such as were to preach in his Name an Intimation to this Purpose, *John xvi. 2. They shall put you out of the Synagogues, yea the Time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doth God Service.*

Q. 16. But (to suffer a closer Question to be put to me) was it not my Design to exasperate? A. Yes it was, however, not to exasperate any against my Person or my Doctrine (for that must be the Conduct of a Fool or Mad-man) but against that Wickedness which doth us all the Mischief both here and for ever. And on this Account the more supposed Malice my Discourse had in it, the more real Charity on a serious Consideration will it appear

to carry with it. The more I could inflame the Resentments of those that heard me against Sin and Satan, so much the more Kindness I knew I should do them. That Charity which regards the immortal Happiness of Men, is certainly the most sublime, especially when one in the Exercise thereof exposeth himself to Difficulties and Dangers.

Q. 17. But (to give my petulant Querists all the Satisfaction I am able) did I not aim at some particular Persons? A. What I delivered from the Pulpit, and now from the Press, is levelled against all the Guilty, without any Exception, nor are any intended by me in Contradistinction to others equally obnoxious. There being no Mark in any Part of my Discourse by which one might be singled out from the rest of his Neighbours. This being a Method which I could never approve of, as favouring more of Spite than Pity, of Passion rather than Compassion.

Q. 18. But (after all) are there not some uncouth out-of-the-way Expressions used by me? A. None that I know of, which may afford just Cause of Offence. Christianity was at first a very uncouth Doctrine, *to the Jews a stumbling Block, and to the Greeks Foolishness*. St. Paul dropt a great many out-of-the-way Sayings to those among whom he preached, particularly at *Athens*, but he went on a sure Bottom. I should not indeed have dar'd to forge Metaphors out of my own Brain, but thought I had no Reason, when I found them ready to my Hand, to forbear the Explication (as I was able) tho' some squeamish Stomachs might disrelish them. I doubt not but there are Multitudes in this Kingdom, who would rejoice to see the Bible itself burnt by the Hands of the common Hangman (I don't mean the *Romanists* only, but such as call themselves *Protestants*) who find so many clumsy Phrases, homely Similies, and flat Sentences in it, besides

sides such a diametrical Opposition to the Principles and Practices of a fine Gentleman, that they'll give the Pre-eminence to the dullest heaviest Piece of Atheism that was ever written.

Q. 19. But have I not made some unnecessary Digressions? A. I am not appriz'd of any such, tho' in popular Discourses such Excursions are not uncommon, as may any way be accommodated to the Subject in Hand, or serve for the useful Entertainment of Readers.

Q. 20. But is not a more mild and gentle Way rather to be chosen? Are not Persons sooner to be *drawn* than *driven*? A. The best Way I can think upon to keep Sinners out of Hell, is first to assure them that there is such a Place, and next, that they are the very Persons for whom, without sincere Repentance, it is prepared. *Knowing the Terror of the Lord, we persuade Men,* 2 Cor. v. 11.

Q. 21. Is this preaching Christ? A. Yes, St. Paul determined to know nothing among the Corinthians, save Jesus Christ and him crucified, 1 Cor. ii. 2. Yet he told them as plainly as 'tis possible for me to do, who they are that should not inherit the Kingdom of God, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. 'Tis indeed impossible to preach Christ aright, unless the Misery which Sinners are under by Nature be first represented to them; for none will regard the Physician, but such as find themselves to be sick; nor will any seek after a Pardon through the Blood of Christ, before they are apprehensive of the Guilt under which they labour. Christ is very imperfectly preached, if the Precepts and Threatnings of his Gospel are not delivered and explained as well as the Promises thereof. His Ministers are obliged to set him forth, as one that will ere long *be revealed from Heaven, with his mighty Angels in flaming Fire, to take Vengeance on them that know not God, &c.* 2 Thes. i. 7, 8, 9. A Christ that will save finally

impenitent Wretches is a mere *Chimera*, a Figment of the Sinner's Brain, a cunningly devised Fable that Satan has made use of for the Destruction of Multitudes.

Q. 22. Can *Saints* find any Comfort in such a Discourse? A. If they can't, they'll do well to suspect their *Saintship*. For every one who deserves that Character, will doubtless rejoice to find Sin exposed to Contempt.

Q. 23. But does not *St. Paul* say, that he *was made all Things to all Men*, and that *he did please all Men in all Things*, 1 Cor. 9th and 10th Chapters? A. The Expressions must be limited to all *lawful* Things. The Apostle would not surely become a Drunkard to please Drunkards, or a Swearer to please Swearers. None were more stern or inflexible than himself, when he saw just Occasion. As he treated some with great Gentleness, so others with equal Roughness, not giving place to the false Brethren by Subjection, no not for an Hour, *Gal. i. 5.* withstanding *Peter* to his Face, because he was to be blamed, *v. 11.* How does he huff *Elymas*, tho' very probably a perfect Stranger to him before? *Acts xiii. 10.* O full of all Subtlety and all Mischief, thou Child of the Devil, thou Enemy of all Righteousness! He calls *Ananias*, even on the Judgment Seat, a whited Wall, *Acts xxiii. 3.* Some may think, that when he reasoned before *Felix* (*Acts xxiv. 25.*) of *Righteousness, Temperance, and Judgment to come*, such Subjects had been better let alone at that Time, but he conferred not with Flesh and Blood.

Q. 24. But is this the Way to promote Peace and Love? A. Our Saviour informs his Disciples, that Strife and Contention would follow on the Reception of his Gospel, that a Fire would be kindled among the dearest Friends and Relatives. However,

ever, it must be acknowledged *the right Way* to end the Controversy betwixt God and Sinners, to reconcile Heaven and Earth; nay, 'tis the Way to establish a more perfect and lasting Friendship between Man and Man. A Fool may be angry with one that gives him a painful Dose in order to his Cure, or with a Guide that would force him out of a smooth but dangerous Road, and conduct him in a safe, but not so common a Way. Ministers ought to consult the Peace of their own Minds, whatever Noises or Distractions in Neighbourhoods they may be the innocent Occasions of, and had far better quarrel with thousands and tens of thousands, than suffer their own Consciences to quarrel with them, or to have the Upbraidings and Curses of those on their Death-beds, with whose Lusts they had too treacherously complied in Life.

Q. 25. But in so polite an Age as the present, would it not have been better to consult the Taste of the more refined Sort of Mankind? A. The far greater Part of the World are now, as they have always been, Persons of mean Extraction and Education, who are no Judges of Style, but yet have Souls of equal Value and Duration with the greatest. And whatever Alteration there may be in the Relish of the learned World, I am sure there is no Change in the Things themselves. Holiness is as amiable and excellent, Sin as hateful, Hell as dreadful, a Judgment Day as certain and awful as ever they were. Nor indeed will the most luscious Rhetoric please, if the Reader finds his Lusts struck at, tho' never so tenderly, but presently takes the Alarm, and flings away the Book as containing a Parcel of sly snivelling Cant.

Q. 26. Well, but after all, is it not Priestcraft at the Bottom? And has not the World been Priest-rod long enough already? A. I answer, by asking
another

another Question, Whether of the two is most eligible to be rod by, the PRIEST or by the DEVIL? It may justly raise one's Indignation and Compassion at the same Time to hear poor mean-spirited Wretches complain of the Priests Impositions, and express themselves in very disdainful Language on that Head, who yet are led captive by Satan at his Will. I confess indeed, that in too many Countries, to be *Priest-rod* and *Devil-rod* are Terms of the same Import; but as for those who make the holy Scriptures their only Rule and Labour to guide such as are committed to their Care in the strait and narrow Way that leads to eternal Life, I don't think they can drive them on too swiftly, or (to keep the Metaphor) *ride them too fast*. For the more speedy such a Motion! is, so much the better. We can't sufficiently bewail the obsequiousness of those who so tamely give themselves up to the God of this World, the Prince of the Power of the Air, the Spirit that works in the Children of Disobedience whilst they scorn the Advice and Assistance of any who would shew them the Way to everlasting Happiness.

Q. 27. But will not such Preaching drive away our Hearers, and if People won't attend on Sermons of this Kind, what does it signify to deliver them?

A. Ministers must perform their Duty, how small or mean soever their Auditories are, tho' this makes Printing more useful and necessary. For that which, when transiently heard from the Pulpit, gave Disgust, being more maturely considered as it comes under the Eye from the Press, may produce a different Effect; besides, it may be presumed, that many who seldom visit Christian Assemblies, are led by Curiosity to read what is published to the World.

Q. 28. But how will the dissenting Interest be supported, if Ministers provoke those on whom they depend

depend for their Subsistence? A. The Principles whereon Nonconformity stands as an impregnable Fortrefs, were never better understood, or more strenuously defended, than in the present Age; nay, the *Jacobites* themselves, tho' our bitter Adversaries, have patroniz'd our Cause in their pompous and labour'd Harangues; for the Sword cuts both Ways, and the Arguments urg'd for *civil*, are *at least* as strongly conclusive for *religious* Liberty. Yet, alas! we were never at a lower Ebb; not because we treat our Hearers with greater Freedom, than our Predecessors did theirs, but rather because we too far symbolize with them. One who in a great Affluence of Wealth is humble, serious, charitable, becomes of course an Ornament to the Place where he resides, as well as that Society of Christians to which he belongs, and deserves to be esteem'd a public Blessing. But if any who frequent our Assemblies, prove Nigards or Rakes, or (which is not altogether impossible) *both* by Turns, whilst they possess an Abundance of Things of this Life, (as is very often the Case) they sometimes bring Guilt on their Ministers as well as themselves, who are laid under sore Temptations to shuffle and prevaricate, that they may not bear too hard upon their darling Vices; for *purse-proud Clowns* expect an unconscionable Deference should be paid to their Lusts, and think it hard that such as they help to keep from starving, together with their Families, should have the Insolence to rally Gentlemen of their Worth in their Pulpits. Wherefore, I have long thought, that Persons of this Character had better be lost from our Congregations, than found in them; and that Preachers should rather submit to the meanest Drudgeries in Life for the Support of themselves and their Households, than make Shipwreck of a good Conscience. I have indeed frequently wish'd, that every public Instructor were discharg'd from those

those Clogs and Snares which embarrass honest, but imperfect, Men in strait Circumstances. I can't but look upon it as one of the DEPTHS of *Satan*, and that he never more transforms himself into an Angel of Light, than when taking his Revenge on those who are employed in destroying his Kingdom, he prompts them *wholly to renounce this World*, under the Pretence of an extraordinary Regard to the Sacredness of their Office. Hence that Doctrine of Devils in the *Romish* Church, forbidding the Clergy to marry, necessarily flows; for *he that is married careth for the Things that are of the World*, 1 Cor. vii. 33. But that Protestant Disenter, who professes the greatest Abhorrence of Popery in other Instances, should lick up the Spittle of the Antichristian Harlot in this respect, nay act more inconsistently than *Papists* themselves do, is very absurd: For, it is far better to have no Families, than not to make such Provision for them as they lawfully may, 1 Tim. v. 8. Neither Scripture nor Common-sense disallow Mens exercising their rational Powers, because they sometimes appear in Pulpits, in order to their laying up something for their Wives and Children after their Decease; nor can any thing be suggested on this Head, but will bear as hard on private Christians. But perhaps I may sometime or other consider this Matter more largely in a distinct Paper.

Q. 29. Have I not suffered enough already? Or am I willing to expose myself to farther Rage and Fury? A. *Threatned Folks live long*. Had I indeed been absolutely at the Disposal of the Prince of Darkness or his Agents, I must long since have been chased out of the World; but every Man is immortal, till his Work is done. I confess, the longer I live, the more bold and fearless I grow, whilst engaged in the best of Causes, and serving the best of Masters.

But

But it is high Time to finish my Preface, spun out to an unexpected Length, in answering such poor and pitiful Sophistry, tho' I am afraid many Things have been omitted which I may afterwards wish had been taken notice of.

However, I would earnestly intreat all my Readers, for God's Sake, for Christ's Sake, and for their own Souls Sake, not to take the Devil's Part against me; nor, if they should fancy they can light on a *fore* Place in the following Discourse, to fix like Flies upon it, neglecting all the rest, but to peruse the whole with such Candor and Impartiality, as I myself do (or desire to do) the Writings of others: And if any of them reap the least spiritual Advantage, thereby to give him the Glory who teacheth to profit, and to pray for his unworthy Servant

M. Towgood.



Prov. xxvi. 11.

*As a Dog returneth to his Vomit, so a Fool
returneth to his Folly.*

THE Holy Ghost hath been pleased to make use of divers metaphorical Expressions in sacred Writ to represent the vile, heinous and detestable Nature of Sin. Among these, I have chosen the Words of my Text, as exhibiting the most lothsome Idea I could find any where in the whole Bible to set forth Vice in its proper Hue and Complexion, and consequently to deter its sworn Vassals from the Profession and Practice of it. St. *Peter* therefore, when describing the dreadful State of Apostates, borrows this Simile, which is indeed the only Citation from *Solomon's Proverbs* in the New Testament, 2 *Pet.* ii. 22. *But it has happened unto them according to the true Proverb, the Dog is turned to his own Vomit again.* Impenitent Wretches are here, as well as in several other Places stil'd DOGS. Such Dogs may be considered returning either to a *profane* or *penitential* VOMIT.

Returning to a profane Vomit, is the pouring out *afresh* from the abundant Conception of Lust in the Heart, Blasphemies, Oaths, Curses, corrupt and rotten Communication, false Witness, Thefts, Fornications, Adulteries, Murthers, and every Thing that can be supposed to defile either Lips or Life. Tho' the *first* Commission of such Sins is *once* too often, yet, alas! there's usually a dismal Repetition

of them ; nay, the more frequently repeated, the more fond does the infatuated Sinner grow of them.

Returning to a *penitential* Vomit is the Perpetration of those Wickednesses which Persons have professed their Repentance of and Sorrow for, accompanied with Promises of Reformation and Amendment, and perhaps some languid Purposes and Resolutions also. As the Dog returneth to the licking up of that Vomit which he had lately disgorged, not reflecting on the Pain and Uneasiness it had given him ; so the thoughtless, inconsiderate Wretch, too forgetful of the late Horror he had felt and the Vows he had made on that Occasion, greedily swallows in again those fatal Morfels he had thrown up, not without a fearful Aggravation of his Guilt. Such a one most justly entitles himself to the Denomination of a FOOL, whatsoever Character he may assume himself, or receive from others on the Account of his natural or acquired Endowments.

I shall therefore consider both these Terms in the Text as peculiarly applicable to the Devil's Vassals.

First, They are *Fools*. This Name occurs frequently in *Solomon's* Writings, and wicked Persons are generally understood thereby. Such demonstrate their Folly,

1. In disobliging and affronting their best Friend, namely, the great God, from whom they received their first Breath, and on whose Bounty they continually depend, who guards them from a thousand Perils, and loads them with a thousand Mercies, who gives them Houses and Lands, Silver and Gold, prospers the Labours of their Hands and Brains, heals their Diseases, sending them back again into the World after he had shaken them over the Grave, who affords them the many Comforts they experience in the Enjoyment of their Families or

Friends; who has also promised infinitely greater and better Things unto them in the *next* World, if they will faithfully serve him in *this*. Ah! what ungrateful as well as stupid Fools must Sinners be, who persist in their Rebellion against such a God?

2. In pleasing their greatest Enemies, the infernal Legions, who triumph in all those Acts of Transgression that Sinners are guilty of. There's not one disloyal Practice, not the least Violation of the divine Commands, but gratifies Satan and his Angels. What Madness must it then be to minister to the Satisfaction of such as seek their everlasting Destruction?

3. In provoking one who is able to destroy both Body and Soul in Hell, *Mat. x. 28*. An almighty Arm can crush Rebels and Traitors in a Moment. *Who would set the Briers and Thorns against him in Battle? He would go through them, and burn them together, Isa. xxvii. 4.* When a certain Philosopher contending with a Roman Emperor, yielded the Argument, being asked by one of his Friends why he did so, reply'd, that he thought it too hard to strive with one who had twenty Legions at his Command. 'Tis surely much more absurd to enter the Lists with one who can employ the whole Creation against his Foes. *Who knoweth the Power of his Anger? even according to his Fear, so is his Wrath, Psal. xc. 11.*

4. In doing Things without previous Consideration. **WE HAD NOT THOUGHT**, is the known Language of Fools. Sinners don't give themselves Time for serious Reflections. Their impetuous and unruly Lusts spur them on without allowing them a Moment to weigh the dismal Consequences of the Course they are taking. Were either Scripture or Reason duly consulted, it would be utterly impossible for them to take such preposterous

posterous Methods as they do to their utter Overthrow.

5. In rejecting wholesome Counsels and Admonitions given them. As they won't suffer (if possible) their own Consciences to expostulate the Case with them, so neither will they lend an attentive Ear to the seasonable Advice of their most faithful Friends. Solemn and repeated Instructions from Pulpits make no Impressions on them, nay, are too frequently heard with Indignation.

6. In walking in those Paths which have been pernicious and fatal to others. We deem such Fools or Madmen, who wilfully run against Rocks, on which many have split before them, or plunge into Bogs or Quagmires where their Neighbours have been suffocated, or leap over Precipices whence their Companions have broke their Necks. What Fools then must we reckon those, who are so headlong and headstrong as to follow others to everlasting Flames?

7. In acting below the Dignity of their Nature. We blame such for acting an incongruous Part, who needlessly debase and disparage themselves. Should a mighty Prince employ himself in sweeping Streets, scouring Kennels, cleansing Stables, carrying away Dunghills, &c. every one would say, that he acted out of Character, and suppose no small Defect in his Intellects. Thus stands the Case with Sinners; tho' they are very *proud*, yet (strange Inconsistency!) they are very *base*, not resenting as they ought the superior Excellency of their Being, they make themselves not only like the Beasts that perish, but become Vassals to the most loathsome Part of the Creation.

8. In taking a great deal of Pains to no Purpose, or rather a very bad one. *What Fruit had ye in those Things whereof ye are now ashamed, for the End of those Things is Death?* Rom. vi. 21. What-ever Success wicked Men may find in their Pursuits
of

of the Emoluments, Honours or Pleasures of this Life, if the *one Thing needful* be neglected, they'll appear Fools in grain another Day.

9. In doing something which they are not able to stand by, nor make any rational delightful Reflections upon. I confess, Sinners may and do rejoice in a Thing of nought, nay glory in their Shame, and sometimes triumph in such Villanies as deserve the Gallows or Scaffold; but such a Conduct arises from a moral Lunacy or Distraction: Take them in their lucid or sober Intervals, when their Consciences are upon them, and the Lion in their Breasts is unfettered, more especially in Death-bed Agonies; then they appear to themselves, as well as all about them, fit Objects for Compassion. How will such without sincere and timely Repentance *be fool* themselves in a Judgment-day?

But as I have very briefly consider'd all Sinners as Fools in general, so I would a little specify the Follies of some particularly; for the Fools of the Age may be distinguish'd into several Classes.

1. Then there's the Atheistical Fool. *The Fool hath said in his Heart, there is no God*, Psal. xiv. 1, This Wretch deserves to be placed in the Front of Fools. For tho' all Sin is interpretatively Atheism, and every Sinner may be stiled an Atheist either in Speculation, Wish or Practice (according to the usual Distinction) yet we commonly limit the Name to the speculative one, tho' some have questioned whether there's any such *Animal* in Being: However, we are too sure, that many in this as well as former Ages, have the Impudence to *pretend* themselves such. 'Tis an old Observation, that a Miracle was never wrought for the Conviction of an Atheist, because every Thing in the visible Creation preacheth a Deity to him. *For the invisible Things of him from the Creation of the World are clearly seen, being understood by the Things that are made, even his eternal Power*

Power and Godhead, so that they are without Excuse.

Rom. i. 20. But if a Person be really so blockish, and labours under such a natural Incapacity, as not to understand the Existence of a God from Sun, Moon, and Stars, with the numberless rational, sensitive, and vegetable Beings in this lower World, a thousand Miracles would not fix a Conviction on him, as not being able from the Feebleness of his intellectual Powers to distinguish what is miraculous from what is otherwise. The Atheist indeed betrays the Fool (or acts an inconsistent Part) in divers other Instances. As when he takes his *Maker's* Name in vain in common Discourse, or in a Court of Justice, while he professes to believe him a mere *Non-entity*; and when he imprecates *eternal Damnation* on himself or others, which he takes to be as great a *Chimæra*. But what I more wonder at is, that any one plac'd at the upper End of the World should own himself an Atheist; for if his Domesticcs, his Tenants, or Neighbours should suck in his Principles, he would stand (according to the vulgar Saying) a *poor Chance* for his Livelihood, if not his Life. A poor Wretch, that hath nothing to lose, may far more easily be supposed to turn an Atheist, when he may mend his Circumstances by Perjury, Theft, Murder, &c. or, if he does not prosper according to his Wishes, thinks a Whipping-post, a Pillory, or a Swing at the Gallows the worst that he can feel. Whereas, one who has a large Portion of good Things in *this* Life, and nothing to expect in the *next*, should in common Prudence conceal his Notions.

2. The *Deists* are another Species of Fools, but of these there are different Sorts. For some of them not able to digest the World's Eternity, nor yet the *Epicurean* Concourse of Atoms, are constrain'd to acknowledge a Deity, yet won't allow him to concern

cern himself so far with human Affairs, as to give rational Beings any Laws, or consequently to punish the Bad, or reward the Good. Fools that they are, to suppose so much Power and Wisdom to be laid out in the Formation of Creatures, without any further Care about them. But others profess their Belief of a GOD, and likewise a future State of Rewards and Punishments, who yet prove themselves to be great Fools in rejecting the *Christian* Revelation, there being *nothing* in natural Religion but what is found in our Bible, and *many Things* found there which the Light of Nature could never have instructed us in.

3. There are *swearing* and *cursing* Fools, who set their Mouths against the Heavens, but *he that sitteth in the Heavens shall laugh* at them. Such Fools, as knowingly and wilfully transgress the Laws both of God and Man, shall not go unpunished. But of these I have spoken elsewhere.

4. There are *flattering* Fools, who speak not the Truth in their Hearts, who cover Hatred with lying Lips, *Prov. x. 18.* or who pursue some worldly Interests, by clawing their Neighbours with undue Praises. *The Lord shall cut off such flattering Lips,* *Psal. xii. 3.* Some, alas! flatter in their Pulpits, daubing with untempered Mortar, sowing Pillows under the Arm-holes of their Hearers, crying, Peace, Peace, when there is no Peace, against whom there are many severe Comminations. There are also Self-flatterers, whose deceived Hearts turn them aside, flattering themselves in their own Eyes, till their Iniquities become hateful.

5. There are *backbiting* Fools, such as take up a Reproach against their Neighbour, and spread the same, or invent as well as propagate malicious Lies. *He that uttereth Slanders is a Fool,* *Prov. x. 18.* Such also as without the Intervention of their Tongues, make use of any significant Gestures to blatt

blast Persons Characters, and fix wrong Impressions on others concerning them, may be numbered among these Fools. 'Tis said of a naughty Person, a wicked Man, that *he winketh with his Eyes, he speaketh with his Feet, he teacheth with his Fingers,* Prov. vi. 13.

6. There are *scoffing* Fools. Such a young Fool was *Ishmael*, Gen. xxi. 9. Such little Fools were they who mock'd the Prophet *Elisba*, forty two of whom were slain by two she Bears out of the Wood, 2 Kings ii. 23, 24. But Persons of a more advanced Age, as well as Children, have sat in the Scorners's Chair; nay, some of the dullest Wretches among us affect to be very witty this Way; and, if their own Invention won't supply them with Jest on serious Godliness, will take them up wherever they can find them, tho' they are never such outworn Things; tho' the smartest Buffoons we have must necessarily play the Fool, when they pretend to ridicule real substantial Religion, because not one Syllable of sound SENSE can be spoken against it. Besides, *the Lord will come with ten thousands of his Saints, to execute Judgment upon all, and to convince all of all their hard Speeches, which ungodly Sinners have spoken against him,* Jude 14, 15.

7. There are *persecuting* Fools, such as molest and harrass others for Righteousness Sake, confiscating their Goods, imprisoning and scourging their Persons, banishing them from their native Country, nay killing them in the most cruel and barbarous Manner. Such a Fool was *Saul* before his Conversion, who pathetically bewails his Folly on this Account in divers Places, and blames himself for having been *exceedingly mad* against the Saints, Acts xxvi. 11. Persecutors are not only Fools as they break the divine Commandments, and particularly violate that known Law, viz. *To do to others,*

others, as they would that others should do unto them, but (if the great ones of this World) are manifestly injurious to themselves in vexing and oppressing their best Subjects. What a foolish Part (for instance) did *Lewis* the fourteenth act, when he drove away so many thousands from serving him at home (as they would gladly have done) and thereby weakened his own Dominions to strengthen his Neighbours abroad.

8. There are *drunken* Fools, who in a literal Sense turn themselves into Idiots, destroy their Reason, and are wilfully robbed by their own Hands of that which in a great Measure distinguisheth *human* from *brutal* Nature. Such also come under this Denomination, who, tho' they seldom drink away their Senses, yet thro' their Intemperance injure their Health, and bring on those Disorders which frequently cut them off in the midst of their Days. A *wise* Man, that knows this Life at best is attended with a Variety of Troubles, will inure himself to a regular abstemious Course, knowing what a Reference it has to his present Comfort and Ease, as well as his future Happiness.

9. There are *unclean* Fools. Incestuous *Ammon* was a Fool in *Israel*, 2 *Sam.* xiii. 13. The young Adulterer in *Prov.* vii. 7. was *void of Understanding* when he yielded to the flattering of the Harlot, going after her *as a Fool to the Correction of the Stocks*, ver. 10. Whoring in *secret* is a troublesome and chargeable Piece of Folly; but Whoring in STATE, as it is attended with very shocking Impudence, becomes also far more expensive, and frequently proves a fatal Purgatory. A conjugal Life being by many Degrees more cheap, as well as honourable. Forasmuch as a poor Wretch, who has sacrificed her Virtue and Innocency to the Lust of another, will on sober Reflections conclude, that a gilt Chariot, a Train of Servants, the greatest Deli-

Delicacies on her Table, or the richest Ornaments about her, are a very mean Compensation for the Terrors she sometimes feels.

10. There are covetous Fools. Covetousness sometimes in sacred Scripture signifies an inordinate Desire after the Pleasures and Honours, as well as *Riches* of this Life, but we commonly use it to denote the *last*. This is a Vanity which *Solomon* had seen under the Sun. *There is one alone, and there is not a second, yea, he hath neither Child nor Brother, yet is there no End of all his Labour, neither is his Eye satisfied with Riches, neither saith he for whom do I labour and bereave my Soul of Good?* Eccl. iv. 7, 8. Saint Paul tells us, that *they that will be rich fall into Temptation, and a Snare, and into many foolish and hurtful Lusts, which drown Men in Destruction and Perdition*, 1 Tim. vi. 10. Pride, Injustice, Oppression of the Poor, Profanation of Christian Sabbaths, restless Cares, indecent and ungrateful Murmurs, are the usual Attendants of this Folly, which greatly inance its Guilt. Besides the woful Uncertainty of the Niggards keeping what he has with so much Toil and Anxiety gotten, makes him look yet more silly. His Wealth is frequently taken from him; *For Riches certainly make themselves Wings, they fly away as an Eagle towards Heaven*, Prov. xxiii. 5. However, he must sooner or later be taken from them, and sometimes very surprisngly; as the rich Man was, who would pull down his Barns, and build greater, &c. *when God said unto him, this Night thy Soul shall be required of thee*, Luke xii. 20. prefacing the Notice with that upbraiding Appellation, THOU FOOL. More especially does this Character belong to Misers, if chargeable with *unrighteous Gain*. *As the Partridge sitteth on Eggs, and hatcheth them not, so he that getteth Riches, and not by right, shall leave them*

in the midst of his Days, and at his End shall be a FOOL, Jer. xvii. 11.

11. There are *proud* Fools. In whatsoever Instances Pride discovers itself, Folly is betrayed. Whether Persons are proud of their Birth, Beauty, Bodily Vigour, Wealth, Honours, Wit or Learning, they shew a Flaw in their Prudentials ; nay, if they magnify themselves on the Account of those Things, which have some real Worth and Excellency in them, they can't escape the Imputation of Folly, seeing they are indebted unto him from whom *every good Gift, and every perfect Gift cometh*, Jam. i. 17. But there are Multitudes who bewray their Foolishness in boasting of such Things as deserve Correction (if not Death) from the Civil Magistrate.

12. There are *hypocritical* Fools, such as act in Masquerade, disguised Players on the Stage on the Stage of this Life, dressing themselves in the Apparel of Saints, that they may make a fair Shew in the Flesh. It is an old and true Observation, that these are hated of their Fellow-creatures, because they seem to be what they are not, and likewise hated, alas ! of their Creator, because they are not what they seem to be.

Lastly, (tho' divers others might be mention'd) the FELO-DE-SE, or Self-murderer, is a Fool. Such indeed who by a licentious Course have cut themselves off in the midst of their Days, or been cut off for their Wickedness by public Justice, may in some sort be reckoned under this Class. But I now consider those only who wilfully destroy themselves by Poisons, Halters, Pistols, Swords, Knives, Precipices, Drowning, &c. Self-murder was indeed esteem'd among the antient *Romans* a great Point of Heroism, tho' nothing can be supposed a greater Instance of Pusillanimity ; for many have been their own Executioners from Troubles *fear'd* as well as *felt*. *Abitophel* and *Judas* are the two only

only Fools of this kind mention'd in sacred Writ. But this Folly (as dear and dreadful a Proof of Self-denial as it is) is often committed in our Island.

But I shall leave the Consideration of these Things, tho' a more copious and just handling of them (as may easily be conjectured) would swell out a very large Volume, my designed Brevity forbidding me to expatiate on what I have so lightly touched. I shall therefore make a few Reflections on this Character of Sinners, and then proceed.

1. We are hence taught to bewail the Degeneracy of human Nature. *How is the Gold become dim? How is the fine Gold changed?* Our first Parents were created wise, but *foolishly* transgressing the Divine Command, their Offspring become like themselves. *Vain Men would indeed be wise, tho' they are as wild Asses Colts.* All Places are full of Fools, or, as St. John expresses it, *the whole World lieth in Wickedness*, 1 John v. 19. Lunatics are proper Objects of Compassion. Sinners, who labour under a spiritual Frenzy, no less call for our Pity. We should lament the Dishonour done to God, as well as the Injury they do themselves. *Rivers of Tears did run down David's Eyes, because Men kept not God's Law.*

2. This teaches us not to regard what the Generality of Mankind solicit us unto, either by their Advice or Example. *My Son, if Sinners entice thee, consent thou not*, Prov. i. 10. 'Tis a sufficient Reason for us to shun them, because they are *Fools*. Who would hearken to what a Fool says, but one that is as silly himself? Shall a Companion of Fools be destroyed! Should we then choose them for our Associates, or cultivate an unnecessary Familiarity with them? *Do not I hate them that hate thee?* saith David, *I hate them with perfect Hatred*, Psal. cxxxix. 21, 22.

3. We

3. We should sometimes *answer Fools according to their Folly*, Prov. xxvi. 5. We can't altogether avoid the Company of Fools, *for then we must needs go out of the World*, 1 Cor. v. 10. Solomon therefore directs us how to behave towards them in two Verses, that seem to contradict one another, but may easily be reconciled. *Answer not a Fool according to his Folly, lest thou also be like unto him*, ver. 4. Answer not one that swears or curses with reciprocal Oaths and Imprecations, nor a malicious Liar in the same Dialect. When we are under any Temptation to Sin, in answering a Malepert Fool, we had better say nothing at all, and turn a deaf Ear to such a one. But if we can mortify a Fool, by answering him without bringing any Guilt upon ourselves, if we can teach him more Sense or Manners, by an humbling Reply to his Impertinences or Profaneness, we should endeavour (according to the Apostolical Direction) *to stop his Mouth*, Tit. i. 11. *Elijah answered the ridiculous Prophets of Baal according to their Folly. And it came to pass at Noon that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud, for he is a God, either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a Journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked*, 1 Kings xviii. 27. The Lord answered the wicked and slothful Servant according to his Folly by a dismal Retortion, *Mat. xxv. 26, 27*. If a Fool at any Time sets up for a Wit in drolling on any Part of his Bible, (as, alas! what more common?) you may huff him for his Ignorance as well as his Rusticity, because he talks about what he understands so little of; you may tell him, that when he grows older, he may possibly learn more Wit and Breeding, than to speak against a Book, which they who are so vastly his Superiors on all Accounts, have, in the several Ages of the Christian Church, exprest a profound Veneration for.

If

If he has the Impudence to boast of his diabolical Success in debauching his Neighbours Wives or Daughters, you may tell such a Fool, that another with *equal Justice* may send a spurious Brood into his own House. If one who has no Apprehension of a future Reckoning, should complain of being robbed by a High-way Plunderer, you may tell him, that if *he* were reduced, he would very probably do the same, provided he had Courage for such an Enterprize. Or, if you hear a poor Rake (and such may be found now-a-days) in Rags and Rotteness, laughing at the Pains that serious Christians take to go to Heaven, you may put him in Mind of the many sore and grievous Calamities which he has undergone himself in the Way to Hell, and tell him, that his own Condition is too sad to be laught at, whilst he is a sort of walking Corps, and anticipates the Grave, by *sinking above Ground*.

4. We should despise the Censures and Reproaches of wicked Men, as being Fools. When *Socrates* an heathen Philosopher was basely insulted by a scandalous Fellow in the Presence of his Neighbours, who wondered at his Patience, he said, *If an Ass should kick you, would you kick it again*. A wise Man's Words deserve to be taken notice of, whether he speaks by way of Commendation, Admonition or Reproof; but the unrighteous Calumnies of *others* are no more to be valued, than the *Brayings* or *Heels* of that stupid Animal.

5. Let us however, as we have Opportunity, give the best Advice and Council we are able to Fools, if there be any Prospect of their Amendment or Reformation. If some Fools indeed are brayed in a Mortar their Folly won't depart from them. Time and Pains will be wasted on such obstinate inflexible Wretches, but others may be more receptive of Instruction. Many that were Fools at first, have in process
of

of Time arrived to true Wildom. *Let him know,* saith St. James, *that he who converteth a Sinner from the Error of his Way, shall save a Soul from Death, and shall hide a Multitude of Sins,* James v. 20.

6. *Lastly,* Let us pray for Fools. This may and ought to be done, if nothing else succeeds. We must offer up our Addressses to Heaven for the worst as well as best. The poorest may *thus* be Benefactors to the greatest, and they who have neither *Leisure* nor *Leave* to speak unto rich and honourable Fools, may yet humbly speak to the Almighty for them.

I shall next consider Sinners under the Character of DOGS; for tho' the Words of *my Text*, being only a Comparison betwixt DOGS and Fools, would hardly allow me to fix such an Appellation on them; yet, forasmuch as St. Peter citing it doth expressly call them so, and they are stigmatiz'd hereby in other Places of sacred Scripture, I shall briefly pursue the Parallel in the following Things.

1. Dogs are vile and despicable Creatures. *The Hire of a Whore and Price of a Dog* are joined together, as being *both an Abomination unto the Lord*, Deut. xxiii. 18. *Am I a Dog*, saith Goliath to David, *that thou comest to me with Staves?* 1 Sam. xvii. 43. *After whom is the King of Israel come out? After whom dost thou pursue? after a dead Dog, after a Flea,* 1 Sam. xxiv. 14. *Am I a Dog's Head,* saith Abner in great Indignation to Ishbosheth, 2 Sam. iii. 8. *What is thy Servant,* saith Mephibosheth to David, *that thou shouldest look on such a dead Dog as I am,* 2 Sam. ix. 8. *Why should this dead Dog curse my Lord the King?* saith Abishai concerning Shimei, 2 Sam. xvi. 9. *Is thy Servant a Dog,* saith Hazael to Elisha, *that he should do this great Thing?* 2 Kings viii. 13. Sinners are also vile. *In whose Eyes a vile Person is contemned, but he honoureth them that* fear

fear the Lord, Psal. xv. 4. a vile Person is here opposed to one that feareth the Lord. The wicked Sons of *Eli* are said to *make themselves vile*, 1 Sam. iii. 13. *The vile Person will speak Villany, and his Heart will work Iniquity*, Isa. xxxii. 3. *If thou take forth the Precious from the Vile, thou shalt be as my Mouth*, Jer. xv. 19. *Antiochus* surnamed *Epiphanes*, that is to say, illustrious, obtaining the Kingdom by Flatteries, and working deceitfully, is called a vile Person. *In his Estate shall stand up a vile Person*, Dan. xi. 21. Not all the Pomp and Splendor of this World can make a Man truly honourable in the Esteem of Heaven, while he continues an Enemy to God and Godliness.

2. Dogs are filthy, not scrupling to go into Mire and Dirt after their Prey, nor refusing to feed on stinking Carrion. *Neither shall ye eat any Flesh that is torn of Beasts in the Field, ye shall cast it to the Dogs*, Exod. xxii. 31. Dogs are frequently represented in sacred Writ as eating human Flesh after Death; *Him that dieth of Jeroboam in the City, shall Dogs eat*, 1 Kings xiv. 11. The same is said of *Baasha*, 1 Kings xvi. 4. The Lord threatens *Abab* by the Prophet thus, *In the Place where Dogs licked the Blood of Naboth, shall Dogs lick thy Blood, even thine*, 1 Kings xxi. 19. *And of Jezebel also spake the Lord, saying, the Dogs shall eat Jezebel by the Wall of Jezreel*, ver. 23. Nothing can easily be supposed more loathsome than the Blood of a dead Carcass, as well as its Flesh. Sinners are likewise set forth under this Epithet: *How much more abominable and filthy is Man, which drinketh Iniquity like Water?* Job xv. 16. *They are altogether become filthy*, Psal. xiv. 3. *Wo to her that is filthy and polluted*, Zeph. iii. 1. *The Soul of righteous Lot was vexed with the filthy Conversation of the Sodomites*, 2 Pet. ii. 7, 8. *Filthy Dreamers defile the Flesh*,

Jude 8. Solomon speaks of a Generation that are pure in their own Eyes, and yet not washed from their Filthiness, Prov. xxx. 12. 'Tis said of wicked Jerusalem, that her Filthiness is in her Skirts, Lam. i. 9. The Babylonish Harlot is said to have a golden Cup in her Hand full of Abominations, and Filthiness of her Fornication, Rev. xvii. 4. Sinners are represented as wallowing in the Mire, 2 Pet. ii. 21. St. Paul presseth the Corinthians to cleanse themselves from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, 2 Cor. vii. 1.

3. Dogs are impudent. Hence the Poet calls a shameless brazen-faced Fellow *κυναικῆς κύνος οὐρανῶν* *εἶχεν*, one that has the Countenance or Eyes of a Dog. This Character too justly belongs to Multitudes of Sinners; see Jer. vi. 15. *Were they ashamed when they had committed Abomination? Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush.* So speaks the Lord by the Prophet Isaiah, *The Shew of their Countenance doth witness against them, and they declare their Sin as Sodom, they bide it not,* Isa. iii. 9. Thus doth God also complain by his Prophet Ezekiel of the House of Israel; *For they are impudent Children, and stiff hearted,* Ezek. ii. 4. What was said concerning Judah of old, is applicable to many now-a-days; *Thou hadst a Whore's Forehead, and refusedst to be ashamed,* Jer. iii. 3.

4. Dogs, as well as all other four-footed Beasts, have their Heads bending downwards, or inclined to the Ground, and on this, as well as many other Accounts, they are distinguished from Men.

*Pronaque cum spectant Animalia cætera Terram,
Os Homini sublime dedit.*

Yet, alas! in this, and divers Respects besides, Dogs are proper Hieroglyphics of human Minds; so that the Satyrist had Reason enough for that Exclamation,

O curvæ

O curvæ in terras animæ, & cælestium inanes!

O Souls bowed towards the Earth, and void of heavenly Things! The Saint differs from a Brute, by having *his Conversation in Heaven*, Phil. iii. 20. Whereas others are *Men of this World, whose Portion is in this Life*, Psal. xvii. 14. *Whose God is their Belly, who mind earthly Things*, Phil. iii. 19. closely attached to the Profits, Pleasures or Honours of this Life.

5. Dogs are useful in many Instances, so are also wicked Men. I can't indeed say, that these so perfectly answer the End of their Creation as Dogs do, however Providence makes use of them for several valuable Purposes. Such whose moral Character is very imperfect may be judicious Senators, profound Statesmen, able and experienced Generals. The Children of this World being frequently wiser in their Generation, than the Children of Light. Heathen Princes, as sacred and civil Histories inform us, under the Direction of a superior Hand, have often been serviceable to the Church of God, who has made *the Wrath of Man to praise him*, and *restrain'd the Remainder of Wrath*.

6. Dogs are hungry, greedy, voracious Animals (especially some of them) even to a Proverb, and therefore fit Emblems both of Epicures and Niggards; tho' these seem so diametrically opposite to each other, yet here they harmonize, only with this Distinction; Gluttons and Drunkards are greedy of somewhat to throw into their *Paunches*, but Misers of something to throw into their *Chests* or *Coffers*. Hence arise *mutual Snarlings*, if Libertines and Churls are in the same Family, or joined in prosecuting one and the same Business, the former will *growl*, because the latter won't live (as they call

it) like themselves, but are toiling and sweating, and half starving *their own Bodies*, to lay up for those that will sufficiently pamper *theirs* when they are gone. The latter in their Turn murmur at, and insult the former, for living (as we say) from Hand to Mouth, and making themselves Beasts, or worse, by an immoderate Use of Meats and Drinks. Both Sorts indeed are highly culpable, as being under the Tyranny of unmortified Appetites.

7. Dogs usually lead a slavish Life. When we would express Slavery in Perfection, we are wont to say that a Person lives the Life of a Dog. Every Sinner being a Vassal to Satan and his own Lusts, labours under worse than *Egyptian* or *Turkish* Bondage. *The Way of Transgressors is hard*, Prov. xiii. 15. saith Solomon. *They weary themselves to commit Iniquity*, saith God by the Prophet, Jer. ix. 5. When the *Jews* boasted, they were never in Bondage to any Man, tho' our Saviour might have convicted them of an impudent Falshood, by remembering them of their Thralldom in *Egypt*, several Times in *Palestine*, when delivered for their Sins into the Hands of their Enemies, the *Babylonish* Captivity, nay their present Subjection to the *Romans*; yet, passing over all these, he mentions something infinitely worse. *Jesus answered them, verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever committeth Sin, is the Servant of Sin*. The Sinner is sometimes a Slave to different and disagreeing Masters at once. He feels a Contrast of Passions, *serving divers Lusts and Pleasures*, Tit. iii. 3. Pride pulls him one Way, Avarice another, Drunkenness another: So that he is like a Dog (pardon the Simily) tost in a Blanket; or, in the Words of an inspired Person, *like a Wave of the Sea, driven with the Wind and tossed*, James i. 6. Sin is frequently its own Punishment. *His own Iniquities shall take the Wicked himself,*
and

and he shall be holden with the Cords of his own Sins, Prov. v. 22. What a Slave is the Drunkard? *Who hath Wo? who hath Sorrow? who hath Contentions? who hath Babling? who hath Wounds without Cause? who hath Redness of Eyes? they that tarry long at the Wine, they that go to seek mixt Wine,* Prov. xxiii. 29, 30. What a Slave is the covetous Wretch? who riseth early, sitteth up late, eats the Bread of Carefulness to get something, which, when gotten, fills him with restless Cares and Fears, lest it should be lost again.

8. Dogs are frequently beaten, partly as Slaves, and partly as Criminals, sometimes in Sport and Wantonness, and sometimes for their perverse Behaviour. Sinners on this Side Hell now and then feel Lashes at the Weeping-post or the Cart's Tail, by the Command of the Civil Magistrate, besides those which their Consciences give them, but the severest Stripes are reserved hereafter, for such as know their Lord's Will and do it not.

9. Some Dogs naturally grow mad, and 'tis observed, they are the only Animals that do so, Mankind excepted, of whom 'tis said, that *Madness is in their Hearts while they live,* Eccl. ix. 3. Idolaters are represented as *mad upon their Idols,* Jer. l. 38. Laughter is called mad, Eccl. ii. 2. *The spiritual Man* is said to be mad, Hos. ix. 7. *The dumb Ass forbade the Madness of the Prophet,* 2 Pet. ii. 16.

10. Dogs, when mad or mischievous or useless, are hang'd out of the Way. This, alas! is too often the Case of rotten or useless Members of human Societies, tho' sometimes, such of whom the *World is not worthy*, thro' Ignorance or Malice have submitted to the like ignominious Death. 'Tis indeed Matter of Lamentation that Men made after the *Similitude of God* should be thus exposed, but

too many who have lived like Dogs justly die like them.

11. Dogs use to be turned out of Doors, when the Family goes to bed ; forced away *into the dark*. There's here another melancholy Emblem of impenitent Sinners. **WITHOUT ARE DOGS**, *Rev.* xxii. 15. and who these Dogs are, we are informed by what follows, *viz. Sorcerers, Whoremongers, Murderers, &c.* to such as these *the Mist of darkness is reserved for ever*, 2 Pet. ii. 17. *The Blackness of darkness for ever*, Jud. xiii. *Then said the King to the Servants, bind him Hand and Foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer Darkness*, Matt. xxii. 13.

12. Dogs often howl when turned out of Doors. *They return at Evening ; they make a noise like a Dog, and go round about the City*, Psal. lix. 6, 15. Howling is in divers Places applied to Sinners in the Prophetical Writings for the Judgments which come upon them for their Wickedness in *this* World, but these to all finally impenitent ones; are direful Presages of those Miseries in the *next*, which will extort perpetual Howlings from them.

I might here consider also several kinds of DOGS (there being more subaltern species of this sort of Brutes, than perhaps any other) and shew you, how they quadrate with human Beings. For instance, Some Dogs are very fawning and obsequious, tho' they meet sometimes with hard usage : These may resemble Court Parasites, and mean-spirited Flatterers. Some are fierce and cruel, as Mastiffs and Blood-hounds ; to such may Persecutors of good Men and bloodthirsty Villains be likened. Some are sly and crafty. To these may Hypocrites be compar'd, who make a fair Shew in the Flesh, to compass a secular Interest. Some will bite before they bark. By these may be set forth such, as hav-

ing

ing a rooted cankered Malice in their Hearts, lay hold on the first Opportunity to vent it. But passing these,

I shall a little more particularly consider what occurs in my Text; namely, the *Vomit* of a Dog, and his *Return* to his Vomit.

1. The Vomit of a Dog is applicable a Sinner in the following respects:

1. Vomiting arises from the Foulness of the Stomach, or from Crudities and Indigestions there. The *profane* Vomit of the Sons of *Belial*, their horrid Oaths and Execrations, their Ribaldry and Blasphemies flow from the Impurity of their Hearts. Out of the Abundance of a filthy and rotten Soul, the Mouth utters corrupt things. A *penitential* Vomit likewise proceeds from those Sins, which an awakened Conscience is not able to digest, and therefore throws them up again.

2. Medicines are frequently made use of to excite Vomiting. The Devil hath his Drugs, which himself and his Emissaries apply with too fatal Success to produce those filthy Eructations that come from his Vassals. Pious Friends and Neighbours, more especially Ministers, are employed in prescribing proper EMETICS in order to procure a *penitential* Vomit. The Precepts, Promises and Threatnings of the Gospel, divine Mercies and Judgments are used for this Purpose, tho' alas! they often prove all of them ineffectual.

3. Vomiting is attended with Pain; a profane Vomit sometimes gives him that vomits Uneasiness, when he feelth some Pricks of Conscience from a bold and daring Defiance of the divine Laws; for very few have arrived to such a consummate Hardness as never to experience any Remorse from the Commission of flagrant Impieties. But however this be, a penitential Vomiting, to be sure, always accom-

accompanied with inward Trouble and Anxiety. I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself. — Surely after that I was turned, I repented, and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my Thigh : I was ashamed, yea even confounded because I did bear the Reproach of my Youth, Jer. xxxi. 18, 19. For godly Sorrow worketh Repentance to Salvation not to be repented of, 2 Cor. vii. 10.

4. What causeth Sickness and Pain before it be vomited up, was greedily and delightfully swallowed in. How pleasantly soever the Draughts of Sin are received, they will afford Bitterness in the latter end. Like the Book which St. John did eat in the Revelation, And he said unto me, Take it and eat it up, and it shall make thy Belly bitter, but it shall be in thy Mouth sweet as Honey. And I took the little Book out of the Angel's Hand, and it was in my Mouth sweet as Honey : and as soon as I had eaten it, my Belly was bitter, Rev. x. 9, 10. What is very agreeable in the Commission, is equally shocking and irksome in the Reflection.

5. Vomit defileth every thing that it touches ; the Ground whereon the Vomit is poured out is polluted thereby, a Man's own Cloaths or the Garments of his Friends, if it happens to fall upon them. They whose Minds and Consciences are defiled (Tit. i. 15.) impart their Filth to those with whom they converse, and scatter their Vomit among old and young who insensibly contract Pollution from them.

6. A profane Vomit is exceeding loathsome, offensive to the several Senses : To hear a Dog vomit is displeasing, to see him discharge his Stomach is more so, it adds to the Disgust if our Nostrils are affected therewith ; it would be yet far more nauseous, were we obliged to touch or taste it. A drunken Man staggering in his own Vomit (Mai xix. 14.)

is a sad Spectacle. *When all Tables are full of Vomit and Filthiness, so that there is no Place clean, Isai. xxviii. 8.* what an aversion is necessarily rais'd? *Moab wallowing in his Vomit* must be not only a *Disrision* (Jer. xlviii. 26.) but an Abhorrence to all wise and good Men. Profane Wretches are loathsome

1. To God, that God who is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity, and cannot look upon any Sin without Detestation. Those rebellious Hypocrites mentioned in *Isai. lxxv.* were a *Smoak in God's Nose*, 5 ver. He is often represented in Holy Writ, as abhorring Wickedness and wicked Men. Nay, he threatens to *spue Laodicea out of his Mouth*, because *she was neither hot nor cold*, Rev. iii. 16.

2. To others, Sin is so base and vile a thing, that even some wicked Men are shock'd at the Behaviour of such as are more audacious and rampant in Vice than themselves; but all who have a sincere Love to God and his ways will undoubtedly nauseate the unfavoury Emissions of their licentious Neighbours:

3. To Sinners themselves, when once they come to understand their Filthiness, when they know the Plague of their own Hearts. *Job abhorred himself in Dust and Ashes*, Job xlii. 6. 'Tis prophesied that *Sinners shall loath themselves for the Evils which they have committed in all their Abominations*, Ezek. vi. 9. *And there shall ye remember your Ways and all your Doings wherein ye have been defiled, and ye shall loath yourselves in your own Sight for all your Evils that ye have committed*, Ezek. xx. 43. To the same purpose, Ezek. xxxvi. 31.

7. When Persons have vomited up what was burdensome and oppressive to their Stomachs, they become more easy. Thus, when Sins which disturbed the Conscience are *cast out* by sincere Repentance,

inward Peace succeeds of course. When any unfeignedly *repent*, *their Sins are blotted out* through the Blood of Sprinkling. *Acts* iii. 19.

2. There is sometimes a Return of Dogs to their Vomit.

1. They return to pour out their *profane* Vomit. Thus Sinners return Day after Day to the Commission of their former Follies, to the same Round of Oaths and Curses, to the same Irregularities and Exorbitancies in the Use, or rather the Abuse, of God's good Creatures, to repeat the former Acts of filthy Lewdness. They come with a fresh Keenness of Appetite, having a new Edge set upon their Passions thro' some Intermissions or providential Restraints. As Waters dam'd for a time break forth with greater Violence, when the Flood-gates are removed; or a Bow, the more the String is drawn back, sends forth the Arrow with more rapid Force; they return after frequent Promises, Purposes and Resolutions to the contrary extorted from them under a Flash of Conviction. Wherefore Christians may learn from hence to return with equal Vigour and Alacrity to the daily Performance of holy Duties. If Sinners return to Taverns and Alehouses to make themselves Beasts, let the others return to their Closets to read the Scriptures and other good Books, to examine their own Hearts, to make a penitent Confession of their Sins, and implore greater Measures of Divine Assistance for the Time to come. If wicked Men return to their Associates to give and receive mutual Strength from them for doing the Devil's Work, shall not good Men return to their Friends and Companions in the way to Heaven, to strengthen each others Hands and Hearts? But,

2. Dogs likewise return to lick up their *penitential* Vomit. Through Qualms of Conscience arising under

under the preaching of the Word, or the sudden Deaths of their Brethren in Iniquity, or some bodily Disorders, or some other afflictive Providences, Sinners may come to certain Resolves of Amendment; nay, their Convictions may be so strong, as to make them roar under the Apprehensions of Divine Wrath, and yet their Goodness be like the Morning Cloud or early Dew, that soon passeth away. They may *repent of their Repentance*, and when the Pang of Devotion is over, blame themselves for their Faint-heartedness, and give themselves up afresh to work all Uncleaness with Greediness. What I now write, is more than a mere Possibility, even a most deplorable Matter of Fact with Reference to many thousands. These, with all the fore-mentioned Particulars, justly claim a more ample Discussion; but I hasten to the Application, which will be likewise brief.

1. From what hath been said, we may learn what Name to give to the Receptacles of Sinners, even great and powerful ones. If Houses take their Denomination from their respective Inhabitants, or from the Affairs usually transacted in them, we may then look upon the stately SEATS of Right Worshipful or Right Honourable Sinners, as so many sumptuous DOG-HOUSES, or splendid and magnificent KENNELS, tho' invironed with beautiful Gardens, Fountains, Parks, Wilderesses, and what not, if Swearing and Cursing, Rioting and Drunkenness, Chambering and Wantonness, are found within the Walls.

2. I infer the Expediency of giving the same Character, which the Holy Ghost useth, to Sinners, when we speak of them, or converse with them. I don't say always; for Christianity teaches us to be *gentle, shewing all Meekness to all Men*. When Sinners behave like MEN (as many of them understand

Good-manners) we must return the same Civility we receive from them. Nay, Inferiors must not treat their Superiors, how profane soever, with the same Freedom they may their Equals. There is a Deference due from Children to Parents, from Servants to Masters, from Subjects to Magistrates; when therefore such talk or act vitiously, the most decent Reproofs are Sighs and Tears. *Is it fit to say to a King thou art wicked? and to Princes ye are ungodly?* Job xxxiv. 18. Nay, Seniority, tho' attended both with Vice and Poverty, demands some Respect. *Thou shalt rise up before the hoary Head, and honour the Face of the old Man,* Lev. xix. 32. 'Tis also prudent sometimes to avoid provoking a rich Man, as one would take heed of a Bear or Wolf. *Beware of Dogs* (Phil. iii. 2.) saith St. Paul; of such Dogs as may bite and devour us. But the greater Part of Mankind being the poorer both in *Purse* and *Sense*, it can surely be no Harm to accost them in their own Dialect, or to make use of a Term grown so familiar among themselves. When therefore we see or hear lewd Persons pouring out their Oaths and Curses together, we may say, (without transgressing the Rules of common Civility) that there are so many *Dogs* vomiting; and if they express any Pleasure or Satisfaction in such hellish Language given and received, we may say, these *Dogs roll in, or lick up*, one anothers Vomit. Nay, should an atheistical Bully of Wealth and Learning beyond his Neighbours (and some such there are) take upon him in publick Company to ridicule the Existence of a God, the Soul's Immortality, or a future State, it were to be wish'd, that some bold Christian were always present of a ready Wit, a valuable Tongue, and on all other Accis Equal, to confront him; who should tell him, (with an Air of Disdain, and as scornful an *Emphasis* put on his Words as possible) what a SENSELESS
and

and SHAMELESS DOG he is, while he opposes the common Reason of Mankind, and what a MISCHIEVOUS DOG he may also become, if the Poison that he scatters by divulging his Principles should be sucked in, as there's Danger it may, that therefore how badly soever it might have fared with *himself*, it would have been well for the *World*, if he had been hang'd out of it long ago. It may; farther be ask'd him, whether he is so great a Fool, as to imagine, because he walks upon two Legs instead of four, and wears perhaps a Sword by his Side, or a laced Coat on his Back, that therefore he is entitled to the Regard of a GENTLEMAN, while he demeans himself below a BRUTE. If he falls into obscene Discourse (as is a very common Case) and delights in *double Entenders*, the NASTY DOG should be ask'd what he means, and beg'd to retire to a *Bog-house*, and cast out his filthy Vomit there. Such Rebuffs would tend more to the Mortification (if not Conviction) of dissolute and haughty Wretches, than *giving that which is holy to Dogs*, Mat. vii. 6. or arguing gravely from the Principles of Reason and Religion, when both the Arguments and Arguers would become Laughing-stocks: *Some must be rebuked sharply*, or cuttingly, *Tit. i. 13.*

I cannot think it wholly unseasonable to say a Word or two to Magistrates, if this Paper should come into any of their Hands (for what is written does not blush) to press them humbly and earnestly to the Reformation of themselves and their Families, particularly that none of them would imitate *Dogs* in promiscuous Venery, that they would *abstain from Fornication, and possess their Vessels in Sanctification and Honour, not in the Lust of Concupiscence*, 1 Thes. iv. 3, 4, 5. For *Marriage is honourable in all, and the Bed undefiled; but Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge.* 'Tis indeed

a very melancholy Consideration, and what I wish great Men would more universally resent, that they who are served and honoured by MEN, their Domestics and others, should place themselves on a Level with their DOGS, and be in Danger of being turn'd away by the great Master of the Household as DOGS at last; *for with him there is no Respect of Persons.* I would likewise intreat such to set up the Worship of God in their Houses; and tho' they have for the most part dismissed their Chaplains, to officiate themselves in their Room; to be also as zealous in punishing gross and scandalous Offenders against the Laws of the Land now, as their Predecessors were in the Suppression of religious Assemblies heretofore. *Righteousness exalteth a Nation.* In the Days of the Usurpation, when vastly inferior in Riches and Numbers to what we are at present, we became the Terror of *Europe*, through a general Face of Sobriety then prevailing amongst us, whatsoever Hypocrisy we may suppose blended with it.

Nor can it be improper to solicit Christian Ministers of all Denominations, while Iniquity so abounds, to guard against the Characters given to the Watchmen of old, *Isai. lvi. 10, 11.* not to be *dumb Dogs, which cannot bark*, when profane Dogs open their black Mouths, and roar loudly; nor yet *greedy Dogs which can never have enough*, regarding the Fleeces more than the Flocks. For though it must be owned, the Populace act very absurdly in slighting the good Advice and following the bad Example of their Guides in Matters of the greatest Importance, when they hearken to the Directions of a skilful Physician or Lawyer about their Bodies or Estates, however irregular *Both* of them are in Life, yet Ministers should cut off Occasion from those that seek it, *and so watch for the Souls of others, as they that must give an account, that they may do it with Joy and*
not

not with Grief, Heb. xiii. 17. They must be faithful, tho' Dogs should compass them, and the Assembly of the Wicked should inclose them, Psal. xxii. 16. The Indifference and Averseness of their People, nay, the Perils they may expose themselves unto, must not prevail with them to bate an Ace of their Warmth and Zeal.

In fine, I would urge all my Readers *to seek a Portion in the next Life.* 'Twas an Observation of *Luther*, that the whole *Turkish* Empire was but a Crust which the great Master of the Family gave to his Dogs. Do not then content yourselves with present Acquisitions, or Prospects limited to time. Pray constantly for your selves, your Friends and Neighbours, nay your Enemies also, that both You and They may be prepared for that Day, when this inferior Orb *shall spew out all its Inhabitants*, when a *shameful Spewing shall be on all the Glory of Sinners* (*Hab. ii. 16*) when Earth and Seas shall vomit up the Dead that are in them, when all the Fire lodg'd in the Bowels of the Earth shall likewise be cast up, and mingle with the cracking Heavens to make one dreadful Blaze; That when Hell shall swallow in all those whom Heaven will reject, you may have an Entrance ministred unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

F I N I S.